New traffic laws ahead!

The speed limit on beaches has been lowered to 15 mph

■ School buses *without* commercial vehicle inspection stickers will now have a maximum speed limit of 50 mph. The prior law allowed school buses to travel 55 mph on interstates. School buses *with* commercial vehicle inspection stickers will now be allowed to travel 60 mph on interstates and state numbered highways.

Vehicle inspection fees will increase:
Safety Only Inspection \$12.50
Motorcycles \$12.50
Mopeds \$5.75
New Car Initial Inspection \$21.75
Emission Only Inspection \$13.00
Safety and Emissions Inspection \$25.50

Large trucks (including 18-wheelers), assorted vehicles pulling trailers and school activity buses will now be able to drive the same speed limit as cars on interstates and highways numbered by the federal and state government—a maximum speed limit of 70 mph day/65 mph night on those roadways. The truck speed limit will remain the same (maximum 60 mph day/55 mph night) on farm-to-market (FM) roads and ranch-to-market (RM) roads.

■ Starting on Jan. 1, 2000, all gas caps will be pressure-tested during vehicle inspections to make sure the caps are not leaking gas fumes into the atmosphere.

The DWI threshold will drop from 0.10 to 0.08 blood alcohol concentration. This change in the law also will affect the Administrative License Revocation program, which allows for the civil suspension of driver licenses for those who register a .08 or above, as well as those who refuse a breath test.

Although legislation to raise the driving age had been introduced during the session, nothing passed.

The standard legal

The standard legal
driving age
in Texas
remains 16.

The current seat belt law has been broadened to cover all children in a vehicle, no matter where they are seated. That means that all children under the age of 15 must be properly restrained --period. Children under two must still be seated in an approved car seat. The law also requires seat belt usage for all children under 15 years of age in one-ton pick-ups. (Please note that children under two must still be seated in an approved car seat.) One other change clarifies that safety belt means a lap belt and a shoulder strap if the vehicle is

so equipped.

■ Beginning Sept. 1, new driver licenses, identification cards and renewals will have a writeable surface on the back of the license so license holders will have the option to fill in a contact number to call in an emergency if law enforcement agencies need to contact next-of-kin. License and I.D. holders already are able to write in where an emergency directive to physician is filed and any allergic reactions to drugs the license holder may have.

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Call the Public Information Office at 512-424-2080 for more information. For a recorded sound bite, call 512-424-2606.